

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0682 1610936
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 100936Z JUN 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1716
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9237
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0670

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000682

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, U.S.-CHINA-JAPAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage June 10 on President Ma Ying-jeou's decision to run for the KMT chairmanship in July; on Ma's suggestion that people across the Taiwan Strait be able to read traditional Chinese and write simplified Chinese characters; and on the Ministry of Education's plan to provide free lunches to elementary and junior high school students next year. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed the possible "assassin's mace" the Obama Administration will use to cope with North Korea. The article also said the United States rarely has had a really consistent policy toward North Korea. The same "China Times" column also discussed the possibility of establishing a so-called G3 -- the United States, Japan and China. The article said that, because of mistrust among the three nations, the chances for the G3 are nil. End summary.

¶2. North Korea

"The Assassin's Mace of Obama to Cope with North Korea"

The "International Lookout" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 130,000] wrote (6/10):

"What will be the assassin's mace of the Obama Administration use against North Korea? According to what was revealed in the 'New York Times,' it will be the eleventh and twelfth articles of the UN draft sanctions -- namely, to intercept suspicious North Korean ships and planes. It remains to be seen whether such articles will be passed by the UN Security Council, but should it go over the limit, tremendous trouble will ensue. ... Perhaps [U.S. President Barack] Obama is clear that such a move will not be easily accepted by the UN Security Council. But he has expressed a tough attitude toward Pyongyang in the end after all. What happens next will be discussed afterwards! U.S. presidents have [usually] gone back and forth and changed their foreign policy all the time; it has been like that for the North Korean policy in particular -- they were angry for a while and then became happy for a while. Never has there been a really fixed position. ... Obama has just assumed his position and thus has yet to form a complete North Korean policy; all he can do is to keep a high profile. The precedents of the previous few U.S. presidents show that they always started tough [toward Pyongyang] and turned soft afterwards, changing all the time. What will Obama do?"

¶3. U.S.-China-Japan Relations

"Zero Chance for the so-called G3 of China, U.S. and Japan"

The "International Lookout" column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 130,000] wrote (6/9):

"... For the United States, the situation in which Washington used Tokyo to suppress Beijing is no longer viable. The United States now needs Japan and also China. But since there are some differences between China and Japan, China will surely feel suspicious and jealous if the United States puts the emphasis on

Japan. Should it be the other way around, Japan will surely feel upset. As a result, it will be able to avoid conflict if a three-sided group of U.S. China and Japan are all included, and it will certainly benefit the United States in terms of economics, trade and Asian security. ...

"Even though theoretically no side will be opposed to the establishment of a G3, there are actually various obstacles in practice. For starters, China and Japan do not trust each other. ...

Then there is the mistrust between China and the United States. With the Taiwan issue alone, Beijing already believes that Washington has encroached on China's core interests. Washington, on the other hand, is afraid that, with China's rise, Beijing will compete with the United States for hegemony in Asia and in the world. None of these problems will be solved by the [establishment of] a G3 alone. Besides, will not Russia and South Korea have scruples against it as well? Thus, there is no problem that the three sides cannot talk about with each other, but the chances of grouping [the three nations] are nil."

WANG